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ADDRESS

IN COMMEMORATION OF

FRANCIS ANDREW MARCH

1825-1911

BY

JAMES WILSON BRIGHT, PH.D., LITT.D.

CAROLINE DONOVAN PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
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УРАЯЯЛІ ОЯОУАТЗ

AN ADDRESS IN COMMEMORATION OF
FRANCIS ANDREW MARCH, 1825-1911

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BY PROFESSOR JAMES WILSON BRIGHT

In the history of philological studies in America, as in the history of other departments of knowledge, a limited number of names will always stand out prominently, if not as heads of chapters, at least as marking centers of influence or direction of tendencies. The name of Francis Andrew March is one of these. It is, therefore, highly appropriate, at this first joint convention, since his death two years ago,¹ of the American Philological Association and the Modern Language Association of America, to pay a special tribute to Professor March, in commemoration of his long-sustained and distinguished devotion to the common cause promoted by these organizations.

He was born October 25, 1825, in Millbury, Mass., and three years later the family removed to Worcester, Mass., where his education was begun in a manner that was gratefully recalled in his maturity.² The child was

¹Professor March died September 9, 1911.

²Use has been made of the "Biographical Note" by his son, Professor Francis Andrew March, Jr., which is published in *Ad-*

admitted to "a kind of kindergarten in the family of Dr. L. I. Hoadley, Sabbath-school author, then preaching in Worcester, in which Miss Collins, with ingenious contrivances and apparatus, made the children understand many things before the usual time." It was a good preparation for the public schools of Worcester, which were then reputed to be excellent, and the lad soon attained the rank of an efficient pupil, of a clever participant in the activities of the literary societies of the High School, and also of "a leader on the playground." He became a ready writer in "prose and verse, took part in the acting of plays, in searching for good old plays to act, and making new ones." The library of the school and especially the library of the American Antiquarian Society stimulated in him an eagerness to read incontinently on a wide range of subjects. In due time he was prepared for college, but his father had meanwhile experienced disaster in business.³ This disheartening condition was, however, mitigated by the Hon. Alfred D. Foster, of Worcester, a trustee of Amherst, who offered him "a provision of \$200 a year for a college course at Amherst."

Young March entered college at the age of fifteen

dresses delivered at a celebration in honor of Professor Francis A. March, LL.D., L.H.D., at Lafayette College, October 25, 1895. Easton, Pa., Lafayette Press, 1895. The reader may also be referred to a pamphlet prepared by Richard N. Hart, entitled *Francis Andrew March: a Sketch*. Easton, Pa., 1907.

³ His father, Andrew, removing to Worcester had "entered upon various business projects, particularly the manufacture of fine cutlery, one of the first enterprises of this character in this country, and for which it was necessary to import English workmen." But now his partner in the cutlery business had defrauded him, and by fire he had sustained further loss, finally even that of his own residence.

(1841), and in competition with clever and, for the most part, older class-mates⁴ won and maintained prominence in scholarship and in the exercises of the speaker's platform and the exhibition stage. At graduation he was appointed valedictorian of his class, and it is not without special significance in his case to add that he had continued to be a leader in athletics.

At this point in the story one may begin to observe the proclivities of the young man's mind. A strong inclination to philosophic speculation is indicated in the subject of his 'Junior Oration,' "Greatest-Happiness Philosophy," and in that of his commencement discourse, "God in Silence."

On the other hand, it is clear that his liking for the study of languages was definitely directed to the scientific study of English under the instruction, during the first two years of his college course, of Professor William Chauncey Fowler. It was in the year 1843 that Professor Fowler retired from the college (continuing his residence in Amherst, however, to the year 1858) to gain time for his linguistic studies, which culminated in his well-known book, *English Grammar: The English Language in its Elements and Forms*, 1850 (second edition, revised and enlarged, 1855).

The relation, at this time, of young March to his teacher may be inferred from a later acknowledgment of his assistance in the preparation of the school edition of this grammar (1858), which was afterward enlarged to embrace, as an appendix, March's *Method of Philological*

⁴ Some of these are enumerated in the "Biographical Note": Hon. Henry Stockbridge, of Baltimore; Professor Marshall Henshaw, of Rutgers; J. R. Bingham, Esq., of Milwaukee; and "preachers better known in India and Zululand and through the wilds of the west—Noyes, Tyler, Packard, Woodworth."

*Study of the English Language.*⁵ The inference is clear that Professor Fowler, as teacher and author, and Noah Webster (Professor Fowler's father-in-law), thru his writings, together exercised a dominant influence on March's mind at this early period. Both masters were philosophic and historic grammarians. They were also 'practical' in their aims (as is made clear, for example, in the title of one of Webster's books, *A Philosophic and Practical Grammar of the English Language*, 1807), and these descriptives are applicable to their follower. Moreover, it may be said that however self-reliant and creative in his work, Professor March always maintained in his linguistic philosophy something of the characteristics of a disciple of these two masters.

From the close of his career at college to his call to Lafayette is a period of educational experiments and of physical discouragement. He began by teaching for a short term at Swanzey, N. H., then for two years in the Leicester Academy, where he "made trial of the plan of teaching English classics like the Greek and Latin." He was next a tutor at Amherst from 1847 to 1849. Here, it might be supposed, was an opportunity to secure anchorage in English scholarship, but his active and perhaps wavering mind took another turn, as is shown by the title of his 'Master's Oration,' delivered in 1848, "The Relation of the Study of Jurisprudence to the Origin and Progress of the Baconian Philosophy."⁶ This inclination

⁵It is to be noticed also that in March's *Method* there is the acknowledgment that "the name and form of this book are taken from the *Method of Classical Study*, by Dr. [Samuel Harvey] Taylor, of Andover [1861]."

⁶It is interesting to repeat the report that this oration was much praised, and that it was heard and approved by Rufus Choate. It was published in the *New Englander* for October of that year, and is the first number on the list of Professor March's publications.

to the study of law was, however, soon converted into a fixed purpose. During his vacations he studied in the office of F. H. Dewey, Esq., of Worcester, and in the year 1849 entered as a student the office of Barney and Butler, in New York city. In the following year (1850) he began the practice of the profession, in partnership with Gordon L. Ford, Esq.; but after two years the former 'leader on the playground' was warned by a hemorrhage of the lungs, and was hurried to Cuba for restoration of his health. The effect of the climate of Cuba and Key West gave encouragement to resume his professional work the next year; but the ominous warning was repeated, and "he gave up finally all hope of a legal career, and even of life." In this depression of spirit he was persuaded to try the milder climate of Virginia, and thru the mediation of the Rev. Lyman Coleman, of Philadelphia (who afterward was for many years one of his colleagues at Lafayette), he secured a teacher's place "in a private academy at Fredericksburg." His residence there of three years proved to be an important link in the chain of his destiny both domestic and professional. Among his pupils in the academy was Miss Margaret Mildred Stone Conway (a sister of Moncure D. Conway), who, in the year 1860, came to Easton as Mrs. March; and the head of the school was Dr. George Wilson McPhail, who brought him to the notice of the authorities of Lafayette. Dr. McPhail had gone to Easton to become pastor of the Brainard Presbyterian Church, and was in consultation with the faculty of Lafayette when the college required a teacher in Philosophy and English, and upon his recommendation the position of a tutor in these subjects was offered to the young teacher in Fredericksburg.⁷ The offer was

⁷ Tradition has preserved the words in which Dr. McPhail expressed his enthusiastic judgment: "I know a young man who is

accepted. This was in the year 1855, when March was thirty years of age. Here the story of his experiments and wanderings comes to an end. Fifty-six years were added to his life, and these were spent in loyal devotion to Lafayette College.⁸

Loyalty to Lafayette College dominated his life. But this sentiment must be interpreted in that profounder sense which can be verified only in uncommon instances. A faithful adherence to a college thru years of financial disabilities, and a steadfast hope and cheerful self-denial thru a long period of development from inconvenient compromise with the demands of the function assumed by a college to the honorable state of satisfying those demands, these are true virtues, and they are placed conspicuously to the credit of Professor March. But the practice of these and allied virtues is fortunately not so uncommon as in itself to evoke altogether exceptional praise. The degree of merited praise is to be read on the graduated scale of character and personality. Applying this rule, Professor March's loyal devotion to the growth and welfare of his adopted institution rises to the highest point of academic virtue.

He was not provincial or self-deceived at any stage of his progress to wide recognition as a scholar. For some years he assumed an inordinate share of the work demanded of a small and more or less undifferentiated group of teachers. He shared in the teaching of Latin and Greek as well as in that of French and German, and

just the one you want. . . . He knows more than all of us. It is Mr. March of Fredericksburg." Dr. McPhail was President of Lafayette College from 1857 to 1863.

⁸ Professor March retired from active service in the year 1906, but as Professor Emeritus he continued to the end to be influential and revered in the councils of the college.

for a considerable number of years he conducted even the classes in Botany. There was, however, no perfunctory manner in all this, but a deep purpose to do everything as well as possible under the conditions, and a prophetic hope that gave a vision of a better future. This comment is not merely logically warranted by inferences from his character. It is a statement of fact, plainly made unavoidable by the records of the college, which abound in acknowledgments of Professor March's unequalled share of the foresight and wisdom by which Lafayette was brought to its best estate.

To complete the outlines of diversified occupation as a teacher, it must be added that Professor March also taught Blackstone for many years; was "Lecturer on Constitutional and Public Law and the Roman Law" from 1875 to 1877; until near the close of his career, taught Political Economy, together with a critical examination of the Constitution of the United States, and (after 1863) speculative philosophy, under the designation of Mental Philosophy.⁹ All this while he bore the title (newly devised for him and bestowed in the year 1857)

⁹ His study of the national Constitution led him to prepare "a scheme of amendments . . . intended to bring about a peaceful settlement of the difficulties between the North and South, which he advocated by letters to the *New York Times* and *World* [1860-1861]. These amendments attracted much attention, and were introduced in Congress, in the Virginia legislature and elsewhere."—"Biographical Note," p. 18.

At this time he also made an important contribution to philosophic thought in two articles on Sir William Hamilton's "Theory of Perception," and "Philosophy of the Conditioned," published in *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, April and July, 1860. The second article was reprinted in *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Edinburgh, Jan., 1861. These articles brought him into friendly relations with, Dr. James McCosh (then still in Ireland) and Victor Cousin.—"Biographical Note," p. 17.

and performed the duties of "Professor of the English Language and Comparative Philology."

A teacher thus occupied might well be excused for submitting to a restriction of the sphere of his diligence by the immediate demands of the college. But Professor March connected himself actively with the organized agencies for promoting scholarship in philology, both in America and in England, and became a close student of the work of the great scholars in Germany. Altho always fettered by the necessity of guarding against exertions that might disturb the uncertain poise of his health, he was notably regular in his attendance at the meetings of the philological societies, was a frequent contributor to the proceedings, served on important committees, and performed in turn the duties of the presiding officer. Add to this his contributions to periodical publications, his work as an author of books, and his participation in general educational matters of various character, and the resultant sum is a large one to be placed to the credit of a busy teacher in a college.

It is surely deserving of special consideration in this sketch that Professor March was content to remain a college teacher. The statement must, however, be strengthened and made more specific by saying that he was unalterably fixed in his wish to remain a teacher in Lafayette College. In proof of his loyalty to this college, he steadfastly refused invitations to larger institutions. It must be clear that we are now reflecting on the most important aspect of his view of the academic life. An institution that had fostered him in his growth might urge a right to his maturity; and he was not lacking in the sentiment of *pietät*. But he was governed by a more profound theory of what a scholar should do for his institution. The principal features of this theory he has made

plainly deducible. Eminence in scholarship, he would have us believe, does not unfit a man for work in a college; it makes him all the more effective in the class-room. Rightly to teach the elements of knowledge requires ripeness in knowledge, philosophic breadth of view, insight into the laws of the mind, sound judgment, and much wisdom. He might be supposed to say, if a college stands for the things of the mind, does it not stand also for the higher and the highest things of the mind?—and thus to drive home the reflection that there should be no false notions concerning the relative satisfactions offered at intermediate halting-places on the journey to completest attainments,—no false notions in the policy of an educational institution or in the mind of either teacher or learner. In short, a college must be kept in touch with the foremost thought of the day, and it must contribute to the growth of knowledge. A college in which the influence of these conceptions is felt as a stimulating force, that college will be sure to do in the right manner its more immediate work of instructing the youthful mind. Nor did the new ‘university-idea’ and the establishment of schools of research change Professor March’s judgment respecting the office of the college. The plain inference is that the college has all the more important work to do as knowledge increases, and as the fetters of tradition are reverently and with candor broken in obedience to newer revelations of truth. Nor must the most effective college necessarily be a large one; it may indeed be a very small one. Its character is determined by the superior tests of corporate attitude to truth and progress, by the personal and scholastic quality of its teachers, and by its wider relations to the educational world.

Few colleges can rival Lafayette in having had such a nobly conceived theory of the character and function of

the college represented by so richly endowed a man, and by him made so effective in the general policy of the institution, in its various departments of instruction, and especially in his own work in the class-room and in his winning and maintaining a position in the guild of the leading scholars of his time. And Lafayette College has earned the warmest approval of the educational world in due and amply expressed appreciation, at all times, of Professor March's character, influence, and work. Something has previously been said on this point, but the significant detail may be added here, that at his seventieth birth-day the annual exercises of 'Founders Day' were officially converted into a celebration in honor of Professor March as one of the principal founders of the college.

Professor March was a truly great teacher. On this subject one could hardly hope to say anything that would not promptly be declared by all the surviving members of his classes to fall short of the full truth. He was that one teacher who, above all others, left the most significant group of ineffaceable impressions on the mind, those impressions that thruout life serve as rallying-points of theoretic thought or as germinal centers of purposeful action. His methods were simple—unrelentingly simple—but how they enabled him to pull at the unsuspected strings of one's mental operations, to get at the very inmost recesses of one's mind! At every recitation might be learned some new discriminations in thought; clearer notions of authority in the ascertainment of truth and of the relative values of tradition are definitely associated with the exercises in that class-room; and it was there, more than elsewhere in the college, that one was corrected in self-judgments and encouraged in good efforts. His methods were simple and his manner most gentle, but his searching questions were so adroitly levelled at the specific

point as to impress the immature mind with a sense akin to severity. Many a student stood before him in bewilderment at the 'cruel kindness' (the student's favorite illustration of oxymoron) of this master-questioner of the dodging and evasive mind of youth. The student's confusion was, of course, not the effect sought, for he was duly rescued (if there was something pertinent in him to take hold of, otherwise he was temporarily abandoned to his own reflections) and by a gradual dispersion of difficulties brought to a clear perception of the matter in hand.

In Professor March's severely gentle manner there was also a touch of suppressed playfulness. His eyes will be remembered for a twinkle that betokened a delight in subtleties of thought, in the intricacies of a problem. Just as memorable was that look of human kindness that assured one of benevolent concern for every good thing pertaining to mind and character.

He was so dominated by philosophic reflections and comprehensive human sympathy that, in his instruction in whatever subject and with whatever relentless insistence on details, he always aimed to impart a sense of the relation of one subject to another, and of a unity, a philosophic whole, of all the knowledges. There could, therefore, be no tolerance in his mind for the follies of pedantry, or for pride in the display of wit. He had, moreover, in large measure the saving sense of humor, which made him alert in genial observation, and apt in varying his illustrations for the enforcement of a truth. In a summary fashion one can only say that it was all instructive, inspiring, and unforgettable.

During a long period of years Professor March had under his supervision a succession of students in graduate work. One and another Bachelor of Arts lingered in the

college after his graduation to study English under the continual guidance of him who had awakened a special interest in the subject. This is not a negligible fact in an account of the teacher's work and influence.

As is well known, Professor March gave precision and depth to the methods of language-study that were in use in his earlier years. He informed the method with the spirit of an unwavering confidence in rigid discipline in minute details. As professor of 'The English Language and Comparative Philology' he set the method forth in several elementary text-books; and as chief director of all the language-work in the college he required conformity to it in the study of Greek and Latin, French and German. As expounded and illustrated by him, it is the method of a keenly analytic mind and of an unquestioned master in linguistic science; and it was fruitful of good results in the master's hand; but in the hands of weaker men it must have contributed something to that practice in the schools which in time evoked an ignorant repudiation of 'philology,' as it was called, of which there is still to be heard an occasional but faint echo. No progress in the science of philology and no changes in methods of instruction, however, can obliterate the merit of the grammatical acumen and of the philosophic control of principles exhibited in Professor March's manuals. Every detail, even of very familiar facts, is carried along in a current of profound thought.

Professor March's fame rests chiefly on that extraordinary book into which one can never look without amazement. It is one of the most notable monuments of industry bestowed on the study of the earliest state of our language. The title-page must have startled the schools of that day. Something had been heard, and occasionally something had been learned, of Anglo-Saxon, but who

could find out the secrets of such a wide relationship with other languages? But there was the declaration: "A Comparative Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Language; in which its forms are illustrated by those of the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Gothic, Old Saxon, Old Friesic, Old Norse, and Old High German." The preface is dated October 25, 1869, and the book was published in the following year. This book revealed the author's full stature as a commanding figure in the world of philological scholarship. Foreign scholars greeted him with bountiful praise, and placed his name on the list of their most eminent colleagues. Twenty-six years later (in the summer of 1896), Professor March crossed the ocean, for the first and only time in his life, to receive the final proofs of his uninterrupted reputation abroad. The University of Oxford bestowed on him the degree of D.C.L., and the University of Cambridge that of Litt.D.

To-day the *Grammar* would have to be tried by the same tests, and by no others, that were applied to it in the year 1870; for obviously the purpose, the plan, and the execution of the work can be judged only with reference to the time of the author, and not with reference to the present and changed conditions of the science.

To touch briefly on the critical tests, no ordinary courage was required to form the resolution to prepare a treatise on Anglo-Saxon in accordance with the pertinent results of Indo-European philology. There was no pattern to follow; and to train oneself to handle such diverse materials was a stupendous task,—just the opportunity for the exceptional man to do that which he alone could do. The universal and final decision declares that the *Grammar* 'marked an epoch,'—conclusive proof that the exceptional man was at hand, and that all possible questioning of the purpose, the plan, and the execution of the

work is closed, unless it be for exceptional lessons in wisdom and in industry, and for tracing the operations of a mind strongly original in thought and ingenious in method and devices for clear and coherent instruction in abstruse and complicated subjects.

How many years elapsed between the beginning of the work and its completion with the simultaneous publication of the *Reader* is not recorded. The outward limits of time, if reckoned from the author's first year at Lafayette, would be fifteen years. From this sum must be deducted at least five years, and there are indications that still more must be taken off. Something less than a decade is not an excess of time for the performance of such an undertaking by a college teacher daily occupied in the class-room.

The *Grammar* was to be comprehensive, and as accurate in all its parts as it could then be made. There was to be no evasion of difficulties in collecting the necessary apparatus; no faltering in the self-instruction that would fit him to make a trustworthy use of facts and principles that had to be observed in a diversity of languages. All the published Anglo-Saxon texts were, therefore, brought together and carefully read; the grammars, the lexicons, and the special treatises were sifted. As he was wont to enjoin upon others, he spent days and nights with Grein; also with Grimm and Bopp, Curtius and Pott. He numbered among his "constant companions" Maetzner, Koch, and Heyne; Schleicher, Rumpelt, and Holtzmann were at hand "for phonology and etymology," and Becker for syntax. This enumeration is in accord with what Professor March selected for special mention in his too brief preface. It embraces merely the summits of his "authorities," which may be taken to

symbolize the full equipment of his workshop reported in subjoined lists of "texts cited" and "helps" used.

The scientific grammarian will always be well rewarded for any attention he may bestow on this *chef-d'œuvre*. The unrestrained promise of the title-page is fulfilled in a surprisingly complete manner. The collection of facts from the extensive domain laid under contribution has not converted the author into a statistician; there is no suspicion of the mere collector of 'instances.' The author is an erudite investigator, seeking to restate accepted knowledge in conformity with increments of independently observed phenomena. Governing principles and underlying rules are elicited with sound reasoning and keen insight. Noteworthy in the manner of handling his thousands of interrelated details is the free, one may say the almost excessive, use of technical terminology, and the accompanying feature, thus made possible, of the complexity of cross-references. All the technical terms of the science are admitted on the condition of clear and illustrative definition and of constant and consistent application. He thus gains an indispensable help in that compression of statement without loss of clearness in which he is unsurpassed; it is a help that enables him always to hang facts on principles, and to mark out the pursuit of principles into various directions for fulness of import.¹⁰

¹⁰ Professor March expressed his view on the usefulness of technical terms in words that may be cited also to illustrate the playful range of his illustrations: "Now and then he would have been clearer even to general readers if he had used precise technical terms instead of indefinite popular expressions. . . . Scientific treatment which abjures technicalities cannot be very exact. . . . The stupidest land-lubber gets more from the sailor's technical slang than from any explanatory circumlocutions for it." Review of Morris's *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, in *The Nation*, September 5, 1872, p. 154.

The book is a noteworthy contribution to grammatical science and method. The spirit in which it was constructed is unmistakable. The whole is held together and permeated by the dignity and earnestness of philosophic thought, and begets the conviction that one is being taught to deal with a great subject in that comprehensive department of knowledge, philology, which gives report of transcendent laws and achievements of the human mind.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the point that to understand his character, his works, and the enduring elements of his fame it must be kept in mind that Professor March was completely controlled by the noblest philosophic conception of the science of grammar. This conception was the spring of his sustained enthusiasm, the central dogma of his most assured faith, and came to expression on all possible occasions. An illustration may be observed in a few sentences from his Presidential Address before the American Philological Association in the year 1874:¹¹ “. . . these facts and laws of language are seen to be facts and laws of mind and of the history of man. . . . The ignorant man's cosmos is little like the real one, and the scientific study of the real one by the aid of language brings out the truth in the clearest light. Such studies as these are the honor of the race, and enlarge the vision and wisdom of man, and they dilate the imagination more than all other uses of his powers. . . . Mind is the highest object we know. Discoveries about it are the most important and most fascinating discoveries. In truth, space fascinates us because it is the sensorium of the universal reason; time, because it is the movement of the universal rational energy. There is nothing great in the world but mind.”

¹¹ *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, N. S. III (1874), 713.

Professor March's commanding personality, his wide reputation for scholarship, the increased use of his books, and his coöperation in a diversity of educational activities placed him conspicuously in the position of a national leader in all that pertained to the thoro study of English. Anglo-Saxon came to be studied more and more in the schools and colleges, despite the fact that as late as the year 1883 the President of one of the largest colleges banished the subject to the limbo of merited neglect, or of something worse.¹² America was thus preparing to react favorably to the new movement in Modern Philology, which was inaugurated, as it is usually held, about the year 1876, and to make the progress that is now represented by The Modern Language Association of America.

The progress made in philology since the publication of the *Grammar* might suggest an interest in checking its pages off against modern doctrine. Undoubtedly that would be an instructive exercise; but it is more appropriate to this occasion to be reminded of what the author himself did in this matter, by his continued participation in the progressive work of his colleagues in the science. He continued to the last to observe with minute interest, and with frequent comment or original suggestion to promote, the discussion of new theories concerning old facts. He discussed subtle aspects of such questions as the shifting of consonants, ablaut, the inviolability of phonetic law, and quantity in English verse; expounded a group of phe-

¹² He laments that "some professors of Greek should be foremost in desiring to reduce the study of Greek to an elective branch and to treat it as a select and rare form of intellectual culture, like Quaternions or Anglo-Saxon or Icelandic." *The Princeton Review* for September, 1883, p. 127. This reference is also applicable to *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XVIII, p. xlv.

nomena that must now be designated by his own term, 'dissimilated germination'; and by a subtle examination of "time and space in word concepts" arrived at a psychological explanation of compensatory lengthening. At one time he called himself a *junggrammatiker* 'of a primeval period,' to secure a genial effect for a searching question on the order of the elements in the tri-literal form of roots; at another time he was even in advance of the neo-grammarians, postulating problems that he assigned to the coming 'newer-grammarians.' Perhaps such an era has now come to pass, with its theory of *nebenton* and *gegenton* and other glottogonic problems, in which he would have taken deep interest. He reviewed books and special articles, wrote summary reports of what was most important in the current work of scholars, contributed original articles to American and foreign periodicals, and delivered addresses. All this activity cannot be analyzed at this time. In a published "Bibliography"¹³ everything to the year 1895 is enumerated in chronological order.

There was, however, coherent and centralized occupation, which also must now be dismissed by mere enumeration. Professor March was willing to revise an old argument in favor of 'Christian writers,' and to urge the colleges to admit, as a parallel to the usual course in the 'classics,' an optional course in patristic Latin and Greek.¹⁴ An opportunity to supply the texts necessary for experimentation was given in the endowment of the "Douglas Series of Christian Greek and Latin Writers,

¹³ See *Addresses* mentioned in the first foot-note.

¹⁴ For an illustration of Professor March's advocacy of this view, see *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, N. S. III (1874), 712. See also Professor Gildersleeve's reminiscences in *The American Journal of Philology*, xxv (1904), 484.

for use in Schools and Colleges," of which Professor March was appointed Editor-in-chief. Five volumes were published in rapid succession (1874-1877), and others were in a state of preparation, when the endowment was cancelled by reason of financial reverses. Perhaps the most thoroughgoing trial of the course was made at Lafayette, Professor March himself taking part in the instruction. However, a permanent result of the experiment remains in the usefulness of Professor March's edition of *Latin Hymns* (the first volume of the series), and in Professor Gildersleeve's indispensable notes to his edition of *The Apologies of Justin Martyr* (the last published volume of the series).

He was chief of the reformers of English spelling; kept the subject unintermittingly before the philological societies and before the public at large, and coöperated with the efforts of scholars in England. He memorialized Congress, and published a short-lived quarterly. Without faltering or an abatement of zeal, he survived a period of general quiescence and became an earnest and active member of the Simplified Spelling Board. His name had almost become a popular synonym for the cause he had so much at heart.

Professor March did considerable work on dictionaries of the language. From 1879 to 1882 he selected and directed the American readers for the *Oxford Dictionary*; and from 1890 to 1895 he was the Consulting Editor of Funk and Wagnalls' *Standard Dictionary*. His share in the preparation of *A Thesaurus Dictionary of the English Language* (1903), however, was very slight; he did little more than read printer's proofs and contribute "A Foreword." He must have rendered valuable assistance to the editors at Oxford; and the *Standard* is confessedly planned and executed according to his well-

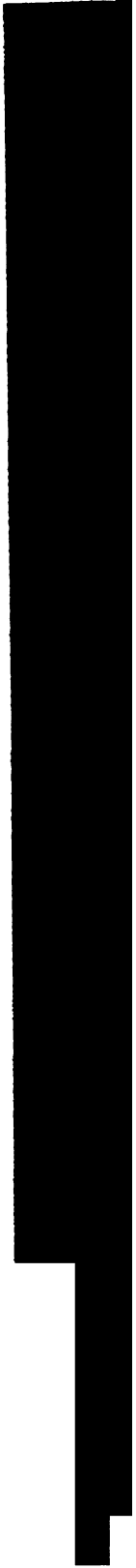
thought-out methods and devices. He was intensely interested in this latter project, and one must regret the lack of a specific account of the labor he bestowed on it.

During all the years, Professor March was a close student of literature and taught the subject in an effective manner. He had keen insight and notable strength and individuality in criticism. Intolerant of affected attitudes of appreciation, he renounced the popularizing critic with his conceits and vanities and time-serving superficialities. The homely, rational phrase is better, more direct, more accurate, more honest; it may also be graceful and rich in allusion. The history of man's development shows that reason presides over the sense of beauty as surely as over the senses of "use, right, and truth." The profoundly human truth and purpose of literature is to be kept in mind steadfastly. No writer is truly worthy of attention, if he is not deeply concerned with the needs of the human heart and mind. Judgments in literature are, therefore, based on elements that are plain to the reason. All about the life of an author must be understood before the character of his work can be rightly understood. His education and environment determine much. The views of life and the state of society and of knowledge in his day are answerable for much that would fail in power and effect, if these elements were not sympathetically considered. The true author is easily recognized. Under all conditions he speaks to the universal consciousness, and he speaks sincerely, and attractively according to the approved canons of his art. Only approved authors, and especially the greatest, should be diligently studied. It is a vain academic fashion to be bringing to light so many obscure or forgotten writers,—even if it be difficult to find subjects for the doctors' dissertations. The thoughts of the best authors should be minutely probed for fullest

meaning; their art should be finely felt. The memory should be stored with words and passages that are immortal. These are partial indications of his doctrine, and they have been expressed somewhat in the style and manner of his terse judgments and admonitions, which linger in the memory of his pupils. It would be profitable to pursue his work as a critic thru his reviews of books, public discourses, and original contributions to the solution of literary problems.

A philosophic and erudite scholar, a resourceful teacher, subtle and profound in thought, disinterested in purpose, simple in life, and warm of heart,—Professor March was a notable personality.

The life of a truly great and good man imparts a beneficence to those who may reflect on it with discerning sympathy. Every scholar has access to such help and inspiration in reflection on the character and career of Professor Francis A. March. This enduring influence is uppermost in the thoughts of all who knew him best, who will accordingly be heartiest in approval of this tribute to his memory—however imperfectly composed—on behalf of the two philological societies convened to-day in a joint session.



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